

REMARKS

This Amendment and Response to Final Office Action is being submitted in response to the final Office Action mailed September 6, 2005. Claims 16, 17, 19-26, 31, and 34 are pending in the Application. Claims 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 31, and 34 stand rejected. Specifically, Claims 25 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Zola (US 4,400,627). Claims 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zola in view of Andresen (The Looping Algorithm Extended to Base 2^t Rearrangeable Switching Networks, IEEE, pages 1057-1063, 1977). Claim 31 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zola in view of Gao et al. (US 5,945,922). Finally, Claim 26 stands objected to as containing informalities.

Claims 21, 22, and 24 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response to the above rejections, Claims 16, 20, 25, 26, and 31 have been amended to further clarify the subject matter which Applicants regard as the present invention and Claims 23 and 24 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer to continued examination on the merits. These amendments are fully supported in the Specification, Drawings, and Claims of the Application and no new matter has been added. Based upon the amendments, reconsideration of the Application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Objection to Claim 26:

Claim 26 stands objected to as containing informalities. Specifically, Examiner states that "may be" should be changed to "is" in line 2.

This change has been made, in accordance with Examiner's suggestion.

Therefore, Applicants submit that the objection to Claim 26 as containing informalities has now been overcome and respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 25 and 26 Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) - Zola:

Claims 25 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Zola (US 4,400,627).

In response to this rejection, independent Claim 25 has been amended to recite the elements/limitations of objected to, but otherwise allowable, dependent Claim 24 (dependent from independent Claim 16), as well as intervening Claim 23 (also dependent from independent Claim 16). Similar amendments have been made to independent Claim 16.

Therefore, Applicants submit that the rejection of Claims 25 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Zola has now been overcome and respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, and 34 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) - Zola and Andresen:

Claims 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zola in view of Andresen (The Looping Algorithm Extended to Base 2^t Rearrangeable Switching Networks, IEEE, pages 1057-1063, 1977).

In response to this rejection, independent Claim 16 has been amended to recite the elements/limitations of objected to, but otherwise allowable, dependent Claim 24, as well as intervening Claim 23. Similar amendments have been made to independent Claim 25.

Therefore, Applicants submit that the rejection of Claims 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, and 34 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zola in view of Andresen has now been overcome and respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claim 31 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) - Zola and Gao et al.:

Claim 31 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zola in view of Gao et al. (US 5,945,922).

Because Claim 31 is dependent from independent Claim 25, the above arguments apply with equal force here.

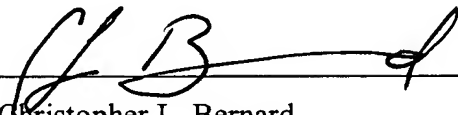
Therefore, Applicants submit that the rejection of Claim 31 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zola in view of Gao et al. has now been overcome and respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicants would like to thank Examiner for the attention and consideration accorded the present Application. Should Examiner determine that any further action is necessary to place the Application in condition for allowance, Examiner is encouraged to contact undersigned Counsel at the telephone number, facsimile number, address, or email address provided below. It is not believed that any fees for additional claims, extensions of time, or the like are required beyond those that may otherwise be indicated in the documents accompanying this paper. However, if such additional fees are required, Examiner is encouraged to notify undersigned Counsel at Examiner's earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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